



MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION

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ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION OFFERS FREE RADON TEST KITS

Nashville, Tenn. - The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation is offering free single-use radon test kits and educational brochures on radon-resistant new construction techniques to Tennessee residents at their local Ground Water Protection Division offices.

"Preventing exposure to radon is extremely important," said Lori Munkeboe, Director of Environment and Conservation's Office of Environmental Assistance. "By utilizing new construction techniques that make homes resistant to this gas or by correcting high radon levels in existing homes, Tennesseans can protect themselves and their families."

The department provides the free radon test kits with funding from a federal Environmental Protection Agency grant.

Exposure to radon poses serious health risks, and individuals are encouraged to take action to protect themselves from its negative effects. Radon is a naturally occurring gas that can seep into homes through cracks and openings in their foundations. This gas cannot be seen, smelled or tasted, but, in concentrated levels, it can cause illness. According to Environmental Protection Agency estimates, radon is the number one cause of lung cancer among non-smokers. It is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States overall.

"EPA studies show that elevated levels of radon are present in 6 percent of all U.S. households. The figure is higher in Tennessee, where 16 percent of homes have high concentrations of radon. The only way to know if a home has elevated radon levels is to test," said Amy Inabinet of the Tennessee Radon Program. "We encourage all Tennesseans to take action to identify and to fix radon problems in their homes."

Taking action to prevent radon exposure offers financial as well as health benefits. Eliminating the cracks and openings that allow radon to seep inside a home results in reduced energy costs, with an average savings of \$65 per year. Additionally, these home improvements promote proper drainage and reduce moisture problems. Preventing radon exposure in new construction is even more cost-effective, as installing new components in existing structures can cost as much as eight times more than utilizing them during construction.

For more information on how to prevent radon exposure, radon testing and mitigation or to find a local Ground Water Protection office, contact the Tennessee Radon Program by phone at 1-800-232-1139 or e-mail at TDEC.Radon@state.tn.us.

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